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## Overconfidence and the U2 Affair

# Spy Plane Story Placed in Perspective

"The U2 Affair." By David Wise and Thomas B. Ross. Random House, New York. \$1.95.

In the two years since the U2 story broke, it has produced dozens of front-page headlines.

First came the capture of Gary Francis Powers, followed in quick succession by Khrushchev's torpedoing of the Paris summit conference and the telling of Powers in Moscow. Then, early this year, Powers was freed from a Soviet prison as the result of a spy swap and brought back to the United States where he related his version of his capture to the satisfaction of the Central Intelligence Agency and congressional committeemen.

Yet many questions were left unanswered, partly because the story was told on a day-by-day basis and partly because some important facts could not be released.

David Wise and Thomas B. Ross provide the answers to a number of these questions. Unfortunately, they do not always give the source and, as a consequence, the

reader is likely to be somewhat skeptical.

For example, the authors report that President Eisenhower was worried about the U2 overflights. In their words, "He had often asked the CIA: What happens if you're caught? Every time he did so, the CIA responded: It hasn't happened yet." The CIA also rationalized that, in the event a U2 were shot down, the Russians would keep silent rather than admit their country was wide open to aerial espionage.

HOWEVER, the CIA was ready for any such misadventure. Theoretically, all that needed to be done was take a prepackaged "cover" story out of the files, make the necessary revisions and call in the reporters.

But beginning May 1, 1960, almost everything seemed to go wrong, with Nikita Khrushchev being most cooperative. He dealt out his information piecemeal, waited for the United States to take the bait, then struck his hook. In the end the U.S. was caught in a lie and finally had to tell the truth about Powers and his U2.

KHRUSHCHEV also benefited from a series of

American errors. In one instance, Lincoln White, State Department spokesman, was given a statement to read at a press conference. But White was not on the "inside" and didn't know the U2 was a spy plane.

Later, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration issued, according to Wise and Ross, "one of the most critical statements of the cold war. It had not been cleared with the State Department, the CIA or the White House. It had not been seen by Rostow (secretary of state), Dulles (head of the CIA) or the President."

"The U2 Affair" is interesting and enlightening. It would be a much more valuable book if there were documentation and an index.

The authors believe that the CIA "has mushroomed to vast proportions outside the normal checks and balances of the government."

In the U2 affair, however, American errors resulted in part from overconfidence growing out of a highly inflated series of overstatements.

—Theodore Long